pp. 85-96

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. XVII. BOSTON, JANUARY, 1908. No. 1.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

CONTENTS OF NO. 1.

THE ENLIVENING AND ENLIGHTENING SPIRIT . . 1
HOW TO CHANGE TIME INTO LIFE 1
THE STILL HOUR: A NEW YEAR'S MORNING SONG . 5
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB 5
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL: HOW ANOTHER TEACHER DEALT WITH PROFANITY 7
SUNDAY-SCHOOL HELPS AND HINTS: THE GOOD DONE BY WRITING LETTERS 8
DO BIRDS REASON? MACK, THE PARROT. V. . . 8
A BIRD EPISODE 9
WHAT IS NOW KNOWN OF SHAKESPEARE. 10
LETTERS OF A SISTER: BOSTON IN THE THIRTIES . 11
THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN 12
THE EDITOR'S CORNER 13
IMPORTANT NOTICES 13

THE ENLIVENING AND ENLIGHTENING SPIRIT.

Sweet Spirit! In our various need
  Is not thy fulness nigh?
Doth not thy teeming store exceed
  Our deep necessity?

How faint this hope, how weak this faith,
  How cold this love of ours!
How mighty thine enlivening breath!
  How strong thy quickening powers!

Enliven into gladsome speed
  Our halting quest of right!
And turn each nobly tasking need
  To a divine delight!

Enliven all the steep ascent
  Into a walk with God!
And keep our early joy unspent
  Along the heavenly road.

Reveal the realm of truth; inspire
  Our minds that realm to hold;
Our every faculty require,
  Our every power unfold!

The eye of reason make more bright,
  The things of God more nigh;
And teach a pure celestial flight
  To soang Phantasy.

To thought new depth, new wideness lend;
  Enlarge, illume our lore!
Help us more surely to ascend,
  More amply to explore.

Enliven hope of bliss to be
  Into a present heaven;
And let thine own eternity
  To each pure joy be given.

—*T. H. Gill.*

HOW TO CHANGE TIME INTO LIFE.

"I am come that they might have life; and that they might have it more abundantly."—JOHN X. 10.

The purpose for which we exist is to turn time into life. A regular allowance of time is given to men—the same ration, every day, of twenty-four hours to each of us,—then we are to see what we can make of it. How much can we gain of real life out of each day, so that when the day is gone it will leave us so much more alive than we were before? Some men continue to increase in the amount they have of mental, moral, spiritual life, and energy, so long as they remain here While the body is growing old, mind and heart are growing young; while the outward man perishes, the inward man is being renewed day by day.

This is the real alchemy, the true philosopher's stone which can turn baser metals into gold. Time has no value in itself; its only value is in our ability to transmute it into something valuable. Time cannot be kept, it slips through our fingers forever; but, while it is passing through them, we may be able to change it into something which will last always,—that is, immortal or undying life,—or what the Scriptures call *eternal* life. For immortal life, eternal life, means that kind of life which does not decay and change; not future existence, but present fulness of being. Bodily life decays with years; physical life is liable to disease; our bodies grow old and die; but all of immortal life that we have within us will last unchanged, never growing old, never wearing out, never losing its first freshness, light and power. Our business is to change the

bodily existence, measured by time, into spiritual existence belonging to eternity.

For there are some conditions and states of soul which take us directly out of time into eternity. There are often moments in life when time disappears, moments in which a whole world of thought, love, purpose are concentrated, so that we live a great deal in a few seconds. There is no telling, therefore, how much existence may be collected into a few such burning moments, when the light of years is collected into a luminous focus, and the picture of a large existence is brought to a point. Add together all such experiences in our past days, and they would occupy, perhaps, only half a dozen hours of time; but these hours would have more real life in them than barren years of routine, languor, inertia, doubt, fear, all put together. I say, therefore, again, that the great object of existence is to change time into life, to transform bodily existence, measured by the clock, into spiritual existence, measured by experiences of the soul.

How, then, is this to be done? It is by taking interest in things, in nature, in events, in persons, in truth. Those who are interested in anything, *live;* those who are interested in important things have the most life —have it abundantly; those who are not interested in anything are virtually dead; those who are interested only in superficial things, in vanity and temporal affairs, are only half alive. As the apostle says, "She who liveth for pleasure is dead while she liveth."

We all of us have our dead hours, hours in which we are really dead, in which nothing interests us, in which we turn languidly from work to play, and return languidly from play to work, in which "man delights not us, nor woman neither,"—morbid, sickly, wretched hours, in which time passes and brings no life with it. We may be working, but we do our work mechanically, with the hand, putting no heart into it; we may be reading, but what we read passes before our brain, leaving no impression; we may be talking with our friends, but we do not enter into their thoughts, nor they into ours. Nothing *real* enters into us from God's universe; nothing *real* goes out of us into God's universe. This condition is death in life.

And yet, as vanity is a weed which grows everywhere, people are sometimes found who are vain of this condition, proud of their emptiness, taking a certain satisfaction in being tired of the world, bored with everything which is. These little insects which have just begun their ephemeral existence are already fatigued by it. Everything is tedious, they say. God's universe does not come up to their expectations; they confess that they have exhausted the world. "Omnia fui, nihil expedit," said the Roman emperor ("I have been everything, and it amounts to nothing"). No, Roman emperor, you have not been everything, you have not been anything. In many and many a home in your vast empire loving fathers and mothers have seen more of real life than you have seen, for to love is to live. Many an earnest patriot, loving his country, many a serious thinker, in love with truth, many a loyal worker, doing his work not to be seen of men, but to be seen of God, has been *living*. But you, O emperor, have only *seemed* to live in your great position. You say "you have been everything": you have not been anything, for you have not been seeking realities, but vanities, and we live only when we take interest in what is real.

Whenever we give ourselves with a real interest, to anything in which God's eternal nature is to be found, we gain life out of it. God is in nature, and so the serious student of nature, who loves and studies it for its own sake, gets life out of *that* study. That is why such men as Agassiz and Jeffries Wyman were full of vital power to the last, going forward, forgetting things behind, reaching out to those before,—perpetual seekers, with no past behind them. How little did such men care for wealth, for fame, for position, compared with knowledge! To know, and to know truly, exactly, thoroughly,—that fed their souls. Every day they were turning time into life, because they were in love with God as he is seen in his majestic universe. They saw him in its mysterious processes, in its beautiful adaptations, in its deeply penetrating laws. A scientific man, loving science, not for its wages, but for itself,—he has life, and he has it abundantly.

But God is present, not merely in nature, but also in man. Those who are really interested in their fellow-beings, who are laboring for the progress of humanity, seeking to save the lost, advocating good reforms and necessary improvements, helping their neighbors,—they, also, become full of life. They are in communion with God, and feeding at the great source of eternal life. Their work may be conspicuous or humble, they may be helping mankind or one lonely soul; but, if it is done not from egotism or love of notoriety, but from a real sympathy with their fellow-men, they show, by ever-increasing interest, that they are drinking at the fountain of life. Did you never have such an experience as

this? You were weary or empty; you were discontented and dissatisfied,—dissatisfied with others *because* you were dissatisfied with yourself, discontented with things about you because things *within* you were not in good order. But then the Lord sent you some one to be interested in; some poor little child, who needed to be taken care of; some forsaken and fallen human being, who needed to be set on his feet; some one struggling with a hard fate, who roused your sympathy by his courage. Your heart was drawn out, you came into communion with him, and so God poured his own divine life into your soul through this brother's need. You were dead and became alive again.

That which gives us power and motive, faith and hope, which excites our interest in nature, in truth, in humanity, is to know those who largely possess this interest. That is why we have such unfeigned gratitude and reverence for the generous philanthropists, the noble men of science, the artists, devoured by the love of beauty, the earnest lovers of truth, the great poets and thinkers and workers of former times and of our own. These are our saints, and they help us all by giving us some of their own love for truth and humanity. Such men inspire us all with new hope, awaken in us all new interest. The Romish Calendar of Saints has many grand persons in it; but the true Catholic Church which is to come will have a larger and still nobler army of martyrs, a more goodly company of prophets, and a more angelic choir of saints. For it will include all serious thinkers, all earnest workers, all generous givers, all honest seekers, all who love God by loving truth and loving man.

What we need in order to turn time into life is to have faith in the value of things; to believe that there are strange and marvellous mysteries all around us, waiting to be known; that our life is surrounded by wonder and awe, ready to be revealed; that man is capable of immense progress, and has in him depths below depths of capacity; that God is in the world, and that he is and must be good; that evil is transient, good permanent; that, notwithstanding all the wickedness around us, there is more good than evil in human nature; that the good in *man* is permanent, the evil transient; that it is God's will to save the world from its sin and woe, and that it *will* be saved. With this sort of faith, all things, all persons become interesting: we love our work, and pursue it with ardor. Life then seems hopeful, and we have not time enough to do all we want to do, to see all we wish to see, to learn all we desire to learn. This is to do all things to the glory of God.

It was by giving such a faith to the world that Jesus gave it life, and gave it more abundantly. He renewed the decaying existence of the human race, by being himself filled with this profound faith in God and in goodness. He inspired all around him with like convictions. He gave to the world a new impulse, and poured into its veins a new vitality. In order to take interest in anything we must have faith in God. I do not mean any technical or theological faith. I mean a confidence in goodness—its reality, its permanence, its power to conquer evil. We must have a confidence in truth, beauty, love, as supreme realities. Then the whole world becomes interesting, life becomes interesting, time becomes precious, the years as they come and go give us more and more of life, we grow young as we grow old; when the outward man perishes, the inward man is renewed day by day.

Less in degree, but similar in kind, is the influence exerted on us by other great souls who have been full of this profound faith in the reality of goodness and truth; and have hoped and worked, and lived and died, going before other men as examples and inspirations.

Such a man was our good and wise James Walker. He was one in whom faith and hope were not blind enthusiasms, but steady and serene lights, shining on all things. He was interested in truth, and, as thinker and student, pursued truth all his days, calmly, but earnestly. He was interested in man, in human progress, in the education of the race, and worked for these ends, calmly, wisely, earnestly. He loved the young and they loved him. He went through the difficult ordeal of the college presidency, where so many strong men have broken down, with eminent success. All the students who were in college during his time loved him. No matter what other and more famous men appeared at the college festivals, he was the one always welcomed with the most abounding enthusiasm. They loved him for his genial sympathy, they revered him for his sagacious wisdom, they trusted him as a faithful friend.

Such a man, also, was Gerrit Smith; a man who has increased our faith in human disinterestedness, in human devotion to good, in sincere liberality of heart and hand. He was one not corrupted by wealth; but capable of using it as a steward, as something not his own, but a talent intrusted to him for the good of others. A man whose perfect conscientiousness no one ever doubted, a

man whose large soul gave us all a sense of great freedom, whose interest in every good cause kept him ever young, who lived pure amid surrounding venality and corruption, forgetting what was behind, reaching out to that before, full of interest in all good things to the end, a life-bringer to the society around him, and to all who knew him. So, while his outward man perished, his inward man was renewed day by day.

Such a man, also, was Ezra Cornell, a self-made man, who, having received only a common-school education, gave, during his life, $700,000 to found a noble university, where others might be taught the best message of science and be imbued with the best knowledge of letters. His name he has connected with this institution, where liberal studies are pursued in the most liberal spirit. When he left the world he left it richer, not only in this noble institution, but in this new example of one who regarded himself as a steward of his wealth and who used it so as to give new mental and moral life to others, and to gain more and more for himself.

Such a man, also, was Charles Sumner, whose death seems a still recent event. His life and his death have both given us new faith in human nature; his life, because it was steadily devoted to generous and noble ends; because no one ever saw or suspected in it any element of corruption; because it proved again that man can rise out of reach of those temptations which destroy so many souls; that honesty can become a parcel of the fibre of the brain, and the particles of blood, and be incorporated at last in bone and frame. His life shows us that men may become at last incapable of falsehood, inaccessible to vice. His death also showed that mankind appreciate real virtue, that though they may be deceived for a time by party feeling and political interests, they at last know who is to be truly honored. Charles Sumner did much for the country during his life, but he did as much for it at his death, by revealing the fact that men honor only what is honorable, love only what is lovable, and that every man shall reap what he has sown.

In April last, the remains of Dr. Livingstone were interred in Westminster Abbey, giving another proof of the appreciation which mankind has for generous lives, devoted to pure objects. His soul was large enough to take an interest in men and things, both in God's world of nature and God's world of humanity. He travelled for years among the tribes of Africa, who are considered to be the most savage, and found them only kind and friendly. Just so the Catholic missionaries, Fathers Hennepin and Marquette, travelled among the American Indians, and found them also friendly. Those Catholic priests and this Protestant missionary had the same spirit; both were interested in the study of God's world, and the reform of God's children; and both have left a permanent testimony to the truth that an honest purpose of doing good will tame the most savage, and change cruelty into good-will.

We live only by progress; if we attempt to stand still, we go backward, and lose our vital power. Religion, in its true essence, is at the root of all progress, because it inspires that faith in goodness, in truth, in God's world, which makes us interested in all things. The worst effect of atheistic opinions is not that they dishonor God; for he cannot be injured by human doubts or denials, any more than the laws of astronomy can be displeased by being disputed or opposed. If any man chooses to deny the law of gravitation, that law is not offended, but continues as before to lend him its beneficent aid. If any man denies God, or opposes Christianity, God continues to befriend him, and Christianity continues to bless him. But the real harm done by the denial of a divine presence and providence in nature and life is, that in the long run, it will destroy our interest in the world, in men, in events. Such atheistic, pessimistic, cynical views take the life out of us. I see young men who are possessed by such notions, and what strikes me in them is that they seem to take very little interest in anything. Their inward man perishes, though the outer man may be renewed by God day by day. It is sad to see an old man whose heart is dry and whose soul is withered; but it is still worse to see this in the young, to whom God has given an inheritance of faith and hope, and to whom all things ought to appear new and fair.

"Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." Dreamy meditators on the past, active strivers in the present, hopeful prophets of the future; preach, all of you, the kingdom of God, by faith, by hope, by love. As time and all of its works, possessions, joys, are passing rapidly away, secure that which is unchanging and eternal. Have faith in God. Faith, not opinions, or dead belief; but faith. Faith, which learns to see God present in nature; present in providence, present in the soul; which finds him in all changes, him in all joys and sorrows, him in the near duty of the hour, him in the large vision of the

ages. Have hope, active hope, which shall enable you to work in the cause of justice and humanity; to work, though in a minority; to work, though no success nor reputation seems to come. Work, not merely conscientiously, but hopefully, and you will work successfully. Hope to do some good thing for some one. Hope to make joy and peace where you go and where you stay. Hope to serve God by serving man.

And most of all, have *love*. If there is any bitterness in your heart toward any human being root it out. It is a corroding poison in your soul, get rid of it. Love; that is, go out of yourself; go forth in sympathy with others; go forth to do them good, by the power of God in your own soul; by the grace of God in your own heart. By your own hope of a grand future, lift others out of their scepticism, their doubts, their despair. Nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Faith, hope, and love, the heavenly sisters, the three Christian graces, with arms sweetly intertwined, like, yet unlike, as becomes sisters; not the same aspect to each, yet not wholly different, these three shall cause that you be not barren nor unfruitful. Begin life so, and it will pass joyfully to its close. *James Freeman Clarke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

A NEW YEAR'S MORNING SONG.

"He hath put a new song in my mouth, even Thanksgiving unto our God."—PSALM xl. 3.

Thanksgiving and the voice of melody
This New Year's morning call me from my sleep;
A new sweet song is in my heart for thee,
Thou faithful, tender shepherd of the sheep;
Thou knowest where to find, and how to keep
The feeble feet that tremble where they stray,—
O'er the dark mountains—through the whelming deep—
Thy everlasting mercy makes its way.

The past is not so dark as once it seemed,
For there thy footprints, now distinct, I see;
And seed in weakness sown, from death redeemed,
Is springing up, and bearing fruit in thee.
Not all that hath been, Lord, henceforth, shall be;
A low, sweet, cheering strain is in mine ear,
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody,
Are leading in from heaven, a blest New Year.

With voice subdued, my listening spirit sings,
As backward on the trodden path I gaze,
While ministering angels fold their wings,
To fill with lowly thoughts, my song of praise
The shadow of the past on future days,
Will make them clear to my instructed sight;
For the heart's knowledge of thy sacred ways,
Even its deepest, darkest shades are light.

I am not stronger—yet I do not fear
The present pain, the conflict yet to be;
Experience is a kind voice in mine ear,
And all my failures bid me lean on thee.
No future suffering can seem strange to me,
While in the hidden part I feel and know
The wisdom of a child, at rest and free
In the tried love, whose judgment keeps him low.

Thanksgiving and the voice of melody!
Oh, to my tranquil heart, how sweet the strain!
Father of mercies, it arose in thee,
And to thy bosom it returns again.
There let my grateful song, my soul, remain,
Calm in the risen Saviour's tender care,
And welcome any trial, any pain,
That serves to keep thy faithful children there.

Thoughts of thy love—and oh, how great the sum!
Enduring grief, obtaining bliss for me;
The world, life, death, things present, things to come,
All swell the New Year's opening melody.
Past, present, future, all things worship thee;
And I through all, with trembling joy behold,
While mountains fall, and treacherous visions flee,
Thy wandering sheep returning to the fold.
—*Anna L. Waring.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.*]

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

OFFERS.

Will any one who would like to receive "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 237 Berkeley Street, Boston, Mass.?

The Cambridge Branch offers the following books. Address Miss M. A. Vinal, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Musical.

"Continental Harmony," "Carmina Sacra," "Ancient Lyre," "New England

Glee Book," "Singing School Companion," "Young Men's Singing Book."

Miscellaneous.

"Idyls of the King," "Poems," "Demeter and Other Poems," Tennyson; "In the Old Château"; Heber's "Hymns"; "Art Thoughts," J. J. James; "A Vital Question," translated from the Russian; "The General's Double"; "History of Germany," Holrausch; "Singers and Songs of the Liberal Faith"; "Fair Harvard"; "Science of Mind," Bascom; "Light on the Cloud"; "Gaspard de Coligny"; "Life of Nelson," Southey; "Egypt and Babylon"; "Tale of Two Cities," Dickens; "Introduction to the Middle Ages," Emerson; "Classical Authors"; "The Reign of Law"; "Hymns of the Ages"; "The Breath of the Gods."

Miss Winifred Evans, 3405 Clifton Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio, offers the following magazines:—

House and Garden, July, 1904, to June, 1905; *Country Life in America*, 1905–1906; *Country Life in America*, 1907, from January to August; *International Studio*, June, 1903, to May, 1904; *The Craftsman*, 1904, 1906, 1907; *Good Housekeeping*, 1906.

REQUESTS.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. I want to thank the many Cheerful Letter friends, who have so kindly remembered me in the past. I still have asthma, and will be delighted to receive *The Ladies' Home Journal*, *Munsey's Magazine*, "Opening the Chestnut Burr," "Orange Blossoms," by E. P. Roe. Also, "Homestead on the Hillside," "Tempest and Sunshine," Mary J. Holmes; post-cards, or any good reading matter. Viola Hardingree, Winder, Georgia, R. F. D. 19.

2. Mrs. Annie Herndon, Belmont, Virginia, will be glad of any reading.

3. Mrs. Louise H. Goodwin, Sandidges, Virginia, who is troubled with rheumatism and closely confined to her home during the winter, will be grateful for any of the following: "The Call of the Wild," "House of Mirth," any of Kipling's, "Luck of Roaring Camp," and picture books for her little grandson.

4. Will you please send me the following named books? Harrington's "Speller," McGuffey's "Speller," "Select Poems," Goldsmith; "Minor Poems," Milton; "Deserted Village," "Unawares," "Selections from the World's Best Literature." I will appreciate the kindness more than I can say. Mrs. A. M. Maner, Hath, North Carolina.

5. It has been quite a while since I have asked for any reading. For several years I have had one of your travelling libraries and have not needed any reading outside of that. All who can, get one of those libraries; they are quite a comfort. I have more time and would be glad to be remembered by some of my old friends with good books of any kind; would like to have Song Books for children, and any Dialogue or Book of Speeches, for small and large children at school. We have six grandchildren here going to school, ages, seven to eleven, and would like any reading suitable for them, and pictures for the schoolroom. Hoping that I am not asking for too much at once. Virginia A. Taylor, Sandidges, Amherst Co., Virginia, Route No. 1.

6. I would be glad to receive any good reading, especially some Christmas books for my children, also "Black Beauty." Mrs. Lillie Rice, Highlands, North Carolina.

7. Miss E. M. Kimball, East Nelson, New Hampshire, a shut-in and a very great sufferer from spinal trouble, dreading the six long months of bitter weather, asks especially for the *Delineator* and the *Silver Cross*.

8. Mrs. Helen M. Warner, New Boston, New Hampshire, asks for Brown's "Concordance," Smith's "Bible Dictionary," "Latin Dictionary," and "Latin Grammar."

9. Mrs. Susan Vaughn, R. F. D. No. 8, Athens, Tennessee, a widow with seven children to care for, and living in a lonely country place, asks for suitable reading. Her daughter Esther would like "Alice in Wonderland," "Wonder Book," "Grandfather's Chair."

10. Mrs. Sanford Snyder, Verano, Virginia, will be glad of any light reading.

11. Miss Mattie E. Sale is now doing primary work in Jonesville High School. She will be glad if any Cheerful Letter friend can tell her where Miss Virginia T. Tufts is, and advances thanks for the favor.

She asks for "The Pirate," by Scott;

Lowell's "Vision of Sir Launfal"; George Eliot's "Silas Marner" and "Felix Holt"; the "Sir Roger de Coverley Papers"; Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield"; Carlyle's "Essay on Burns"; Coleridge's "The Ancient Mariner"; and "Bennet's "Latin Composition." Address, Miss Mattie E. Sale. Jonesville, North Carolina.

12. Miss Etta W. Freeman, Smead's Ferry, North Carolina, a teacher, would like *Ladies' Home Journal* or *Harper's Monthly.*

13. It is some time since I have written you what a comfort the *Cheerful Letter* has been to me; tongue or pen could not tell the blessed comfort it has been to all, to have something good to read. I would like the magazine *Human Life, Young People's Weekly, Youth's Companion,* or good reading of any kind. The *Cheerful Letter* has been such a blessing to me for many ways more than I ever could write and I have enjoyed it doubly because I have passed it on. May God bless the noble work. Mrs. D. D. Jayne, West Detroit, Michigan.

14. The following books are greatly desired for use in Proctor's Academy: address Theodore P. Farr, Andover, New Hampshire. "Lady of the Lake," "Ivanhoe," "The Talisman," "Marmion," "Guy Mannering," "Tale of Two Cities," "David Copperfield," "Dombey and Son," "Ancient Mariner," "Evangeline," "Twice Told Tales," "Marble Faun," and any of Shakespeare's works.

15. *Youth's Companion* of any year are asked for by Mrs. L. B. Wilbenks, Tennessee Colony, Texas.

16. Mrs. Mittie Presler, Polkton, North Carolina, will be thankful for Johnson's "Primary Arithmetic" and Harrington's "Speller."

CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

L. H. Kirby, from Lenoir to West Raleigh, North Carolina.

Mrs. Cora A. Hoskinson has moved back to Parkville, Michigan.

Notice has come to us of the death of two of our correspondents: Mrs. Julia M. Ashley died at Deerfield, October 31. James M. Wall, Oxford, North Carolina. He was an invalid for many years, dependent upon an aged uncle. After an acute illness of a week he died on October 6.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

HOW ANOTHER TEACHER DEALT WITH PROFANITY.

[This account was given to the Editor by the teacher herself, so that she can vouch for its accuracy.]

At the time that the teacher took charge of the school in question, she found that a large number of the boys had the habit of swearing.

She said nothing to any boy whose language she overheard; but one day she chose a good hour for having a little talk on the subject, and said that she had something to consider, and wanted to know what *they* thought about it.

Speaking in a quiet, friendly tone, she expressed herself substantially, as follows:—

"I have noticed that there is a good deal of swearing in the school. And I wonder whether you think that expressions of that sort are rather bright and smart; that they make conversation more lively and more entertaining. How is it? Some persons may think so. I should like to have your opinion. If it is really so, if it is a bright and smart thing, a thing that makes what we say more entertaining, then I ought to use such expressions also. Would it sound well for me to do so? Suppose I said [thus and so] when I call up the geography class? [using some of the very phrases she had heard].

"But, if on the other hand, as other persons think, it is something low and vulgar to swear, then every one ought to give it up. I want to know what you all think?"

Having brought them to the point of giving a candid opinion, in a placid frame of mind, and without having excited opposition by blame, she took a vote in regard to the question. The whole school voted unanimously against swearing; as something "low and vulgar, and to be avoided, not something bright, smart, and entertaining."

"Then we are all agreed, it seems," she said. "And now what shall we do to put an end to this evil? For we can hardly expect to cure a bad habit without some definite plan. Let us consider this next. What would *you* propose?"

The boys proposed such severe penalties that she was obliged to modify them.

"We do not want to have any penalty that would make a boy feel disgraced," she said.

They agreed together on some suitable penalty, and the result was perfectly successful. In a few weeks from the time that she took charge of the school there was scarcely ever a profane word to be heard.

The chief difference between her method and that described by Jacob Abbott seems to have been that in his narration the teacher assumed at once the sinfulness of using profane language, in hers the boys were themselves induced to give this view as their own opinion. The vulgarity seemed to be the point brought forward, also, rather than the sin. L. F. C.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL HELPS AND HINTS: THE GOOD DONE BY WRITING LETTERS.

When I was a boy I had many Sunday-school teachers, but one, most faithful and long-continued, was a woman now dead. I do not recall a word she said to me in all the years of her class instruction, and yet she is probably the most influential teacher I ever had, in any kind of school, because of three letters she wrote me at intervals of about a year.

I was in the town and was seeing her every day. There was no apparent necessity for a letter. However, the fact that she wrote those letters to me made a tremendous impression upon me. They were well-written letters, and inspired a respect for her literary ability. They were beautifully neat and careful in appearance; time had evidently been lavished upon them. They were tender, urgent, thoughtful pleadings for me to declare myself a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, and join his church.

Well, I did not join the church till years afterward; but those letters never released their hold upon me, and were positive factors in my decision. I do not recall (more shame to me!) that I ever replied to the letters or even thanked the writer.

This article is for the purpose of urging upon Sunday-school teachers just such work as that. Remember, a letter is an event in a child's life, a rare surprise. To receive a letter—actually by post—gives the child a delightful sense of importance. The precious missive is sure to be treasured, its contents are sure to be remembered.

Nor even in the case of older persons—adult classes—is a letter despised. Always it is valued above the same words spoken. It is an assurance of interest on the part of the writer. It is proof that he is eager to spend time and strength to gain the ends of the letter.

While taking all advantage of unexpected occasions and opportunities, I should not wait for them, but I should plan this letter-writing as far in advance as possible. I should even keep a little ledger, and set up a letter account with every scholar—just when I wrote and when I received an answer, and what the results were. I should use copying ink, and make a press copy of all my letters, to review now and then what I had written to each, and to avoid duplicating. These copies, with whatever letters I received from each scholar, I should keep in separate pigeon-holes, one to a person, striving thus to give each correspondence the individuality that these different souls need.

In your oral teaching you must do mass work, chiefly; but in this letter-writing you are doing just the personal work that is most fruitful. You can study each scholar by himself and meet his own peculiar need.—*Sunday-school Problems, in The World's Crisis.*

DO BIRDS REASON?

MACK, THE PARROT.

V.

Mack is very careful of his word. He will never be open to the charge of using "idle words"; and certainly not false ones. His friend Ethel was singing at the piano a beautiful German song, "The Nightingale." Mack listened attentively, and, when the song had ended, said emphatically, "I like that!"

A few moments later I repeated his remark to some one just entering the room, when he said, as if to himself, "I really must be careful," adding, a moment later:

"It is her I like."

We were about to move to a smaller and less expensive house, and in accordance with our usual custom told him of the coming change. The only reply was a contemptuous "Yah! yah! yah!" as much as to say:

"What fools you mortals are! You don't know when you're well off!"

The "moving" was regarded with much disfavor. Mack seemed to know that he was about to leave many delightful friends behind. From his cage, on the piazza, he enjoyed a good deal of social, neighborly life. In order to make way for new tenants we took possession of the new home before the grounds were quite in order. Before the piazza a huge pile of gravel remained for a few days; and on this gravel a few hens from a neighbor's poultry yard walked slowly up and down. Mack was aroused:

"Go right down from there!" he exclaimed. "You can't stop here!" and down they all walked in solemn procession, never to return. His word was law.

As Mack hung on the piazza, he became interested in the life around him,—the chil-

dren at their games, cats, dogs, hens, anything that had life. Doody, a neighbor's cat, was seen gazing at him from the ground below the piazza, and her green glassy eyes were enough to inspire terror in the heart of any bird. Not so with Mack, however. He looked down upon her complacently, and said:

"Well?"

She walked demurely away.

Wishing to see how he would be affected by the sight of a hundred or more fowls in one yard, I carried him to a neighbor's premises. The hens came running eagerly forward to see the handsome new-comer, when out walked the splendid rooster, made some cautious remarks to his family of hens, whereupon they turned their backs on poor Mack, and dutifully followed their lord and master, much to the parrot's surprise and mystification. Our neighborly call had been a failure.

One stormy Sunday noon the windows of the dining-room were covered with steam. As I wiped them dry, I said:

"This looks as if I were cleaning house on Sunday," to which Mack replied dryly: "That's what I thought!"—*Helen M. Knowlton.*

A BIRD EPISODE.

One year, upon going to a little house we occupied during the summer, we found guests already installed, a pretty phœbe bird and her mate, who had just finished a neat nest on a beam in the corner of the porch, and who were doubtless much disgusted to find we meant to share the house with them. The mother bird certainly was disturbed in her mind and uncertain as to what would be the wisest course to pursue in view of our advent, as well she might be, since we brought in our train a cat and a dog. Soon, however, she decided to trust us and not throw away all her past labor, and, completing the nest, she proceeded to lay the eggs, which she sat upon calmly and confidingly, to our great joy. While we were careful not to be too noisy or abrupt when in the porch, we yet came and went as we pleased, talked freely, and even sang, sitting within eight feet of the nest. We fancied she began to like us, and she certainly trusted us from the first. It was an exciting time when the birdlings appeared, four of them, and from that day what busy birds they were! At first the morsels brought were most tiny.

Just by the porch was a rather tall stake supporting a plant, and the little mother's habit was to perch on this pole for a moment and look warily about before flying to the nest. Our presence did not disturb her in the least, but there were a cat and a dog to be reckoned with. It was amusing to see that, whereas at first the small insect she held hardly parted the beak, soon it became necessary to provide larger game, till, finally, when the babies grew to be big and proportionately hungry, really large creatures were brought, and occasionally one would escape and have to be pursued and brought back.

One day a thrilling event occurred. So far the cat had given us little trouble, but this was not through any superior virtue on his part, but because of the presence of three boys who were making us a visit, three very nice boys, but who did not happen to appeal to Conrad's taste. So he was in the habit of taking himself off for much of the day, and this contributed greatly to the peace of mind of the little phœbes. But on this especial day he chanced to be asleep in a room near the larger room into which the porch led by an always-open door, and on this particular day the mother bird for the first time flew in at the door to take a peep at things. The next minute or two were exciting enough. There was a flash of shining fur in the air, a scramble against a window, a cat apparently catching a little bird, and two desperate hands clutching at the cat. Then a bird dashed out at the door, apparently unhurt, and on the floor lay two or three tail feathers. It remained to be seen whether she would venture to come again to the nest, but after an absence of several hours she did return, minus most of her tail, but otherwise none the worse for her frightful experience.

The birds grew fast. We were eager to see the flight which we knew must be imminent, and only feared it would happen early in the morning, but we were at breakfast one day when we heard a slight, but unusual, fluttering at the door, and upon going cautiously to it we saw that the hegira was really at hand, the nestlings were about to leave their home. They were dotted about on the railing of the porch when we saw them, all except one little fellow who had evidently not had, so far, as fair a chance in life as the others. He was still in the nest, apparently enjoying the luxury of having plenty of room, and for several hours he stayed there, gathering strength for the flight. All day the parents were busy, feeding now one and now another of the scattered family, but towards evening a calm supervened and we saw and heard no more commotion. In the early evening we wandered out, wondering if we should

catch a glimpse of any of the youngsters, when we saw a pretty sight. At the back of the house, on the branch of a butternut-tree, there, placed compactly side by side, the head of one next the tail of his fellow, pressed close so as almost to seem like one plump bird, were the four small creatures, evidently settled for the night by a careful parent, their baby fluff silhouetted clearly against the sunset sky. We never saw them again except as in memory we recalled that last sweet picture. A. B. S.

WHAT IS NOW KNOWN OF SHAKESPEARE.

Among the popular delusions of the early part of the nineteenth century, perhaps the most extraordinary was that relating to William Shakespeare, concerning whose life, we were told, scarcely anything is known. This error has been repeated over and over again, and industriously spread by writers who took no trouble to ascertain the actual facts, and thought that because *they* were in ignorance the rest of the world must be as slightly informed as themselves.

. . . . . .

In the year 1564 there was living in Stratford-on-Avon a substantial burgess, John Shakespeare by name, who had settled in this prosperous Warwickshire town some twelve years before that date. He was then the owner of property in the borough, and had held several important offices under the Corporation, including that of Chamberlain, in which capacity he kept the public accounts with accuracy, and appears to have appended his name thereto. These documents are still preserved among the Corporation records. In 1557 he married Mary, the youngest daughter of Robert Arden of Wilmcote. She was an heiress of good estate. A year before his marriage John Shakespeare purchased a freehold in Greenhill Street, and the house in which he lived in Henley Street.

The Shakespeares were settled in Warwickshire in the fourteenth century upon land situated in the parish of Temple Balsall, at the farm called Olddich, or Woldich. They appear to have held some of their lands upon a tenure of military service, and to have been people of considerable standing in the district, judging from the records of their names in the register of a Warwickshire Guild and in monastic annals. In times of war they and their servants rendered service on the battlefield; and in peace they cultivated lands, won, it may be, in some hard-fought fight. Two women of the family attained the dignity of prioress of a local monastery, one, Isabel Shakespeare, being Superioress of the Priory at Baddesley-Clinton in the heart of the Forest of Arden. The alliance of John Shakespeare with Mary Arden, already mentioned, is significant of the respectable position of the Shakespeares, for the Ardens were a knightly family, of noble descent, Robert Arden's father, Thomas, being the second son of Sir Walter Arden, of Park Hall, Erdington, near Birmingham, and of Eleanor, the daughter of John Hampden, of the famous Buckinghamshire family. Sir Walter Arden was the lineal descendant of Turchill de Arden, who held fifty-two lordships in Warwickshire before the time of William the Conqueror. The Ardens had formed alliances with the most noble families of the realm.

The facts thus briefly stated have taken years of patient research to discover, and there is still much to be learned concerning the family connections of the Ardens and the Shakespeares. Yet who will now say that the Swan of Avon was of lowly origin?

His station was that of the upper middle class; above the peasant and below the noble.

The earliest official record of William Shakespeare is contained in the Parish Church of Stratford-on-Avon. This valuable volume is a transcript made in the year 1600 of the entries from 1558, each page being authenticated by the vicar and churchwardens. The *Register* has again been transcribed by Mr. Richard Savage, and printed by the Parish Register Society, 1897 (under date 1564). Among the baptisms is the following entry: "*April 26th Gulielmus, filius Johannes Shakespeare.*"

The font in which the baptism was solemnized is preserved in the Parish Church. The vicar at that time was the Rev. John Brechgirdle, and the ceremony is believed, upon sufficient grounds, to have taken place upon the third day after the birth of the infant. William was the third child of his parents; his sisters, Joan, born 1558, and Margaret, born 1562, had died in infancy. In 1566 his brother Gilbert was born; in 1569 a second sister Joan; in 1571, Anne; in 1573, Richard; and in 1580, Edmund. These were the eight children of John and Mary Shakespeare.

The surroundings of the family at that time have been accurately ascertained. The Shakespeares occupied a grange in Henley Street, with barns and stables in the rear. John Shakespeare plied his business of glover and dealer in wool and other country prod-

uce. He took an active part in the affairs of the town. His brothers, Thomas and Henry, were living at Snitterfield, the nearest village to Stratford on the north-east, and his wife's relatives were living in the district.

In the year of the poet's birth (1564), in the month of July, a dreadful plague, "*The Black Death*," made its appearance in Stratford and decimated the town. The house in Henley Street fortunately escaped the ravages of the pestilence, and its owner contributed, according to his means, to the relief of his fellow-townsmen's sufferings. In connection with this event it may be interesting to state that there is still preserved in the town a relic of this terrible period, a "plague pan," wherein rosemary and other herbs were burnt to purify the air. Upon the brazen lid of this instrument are the words, "Lord have mercy upon us," and in the centre is engraved a representation of a fabulous animal, possibly intended to act as a sort of charm. This curious pan is the property of Mr. Edward Fox of No. 1 High Street.

In the next year, 1565, John Shakespeare was elected an alderman of Stratford. A few months later, February, 1566, he received over three pounds (being equivalent to more than thirty pounds of our present money), a debt due to him from the Corporation. In 1567 he was a candidate for the office of high bailiff or mayor and in the following year was elected to that office. His son William was then in the fifth year of his age.

Stratford-on-Avon,

William Stanton.

(*To be Continued.*)

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, Canton Corner, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

I.

DOUBLE CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.

(This differs from the ordinary cross-word enigma by requiring two answers instead of one.)

In flag, but not in silk.
In California, but not in Ohio.
In Delaware, but not in Montana.
In left, but not in right.
In throne, but not in act.
In Maryland, but not in Kentucky.
In end, but not in finish.

My whole gives the names of two Presidents of the United States.

II.

CONUNDRUMS.

14. When is the easiest time to read the book of nature?

15. Which is the gayest letter of the alphabet?

III.

HEROES AND HEROINES.

In what books do they figure?

1. Jethro Bass.
2. Becky Sharp.
3. Moses Primrose.
4. Little Nell.
5. Reginald Front de Bœuf.
6. Mrs. Poyser.

IV.

A SQUARE.

1. An illustrious man.
2. Level, smooth, or equal in surface.
3. Lively Scottish dance.
4. One alone.

V.

CHARACTERISTIC INITIALS.

1. Many Merry Doings.
2. Justly Honored.
3. A True Marine.
4. Can Draw Girls.
5. Joyous Reformer.

—*Selected.*

Answers to Puzzles in the December Number.

I. A ZIGZAG.

SAFE
B**A**RD
DIN**T**
EAS**T**
LE**A**D
E**C**HO
LAND
S**A**ND
LO**U**T
BAS**S**

III. AN ACROSTIC.

CAMBRIDGE
C**H**AMPLAIN
WO**R**CESTER
LE**X**INGTON
HAMP**S**HIRE
JOHNS**T**OWN
CHRIST**M**AS
FRONTEN**A**C
ANNAPOLI**S**

II. RUSSIAN RIDDLES.—1. Your eyes. 2. One—the dead one.

IV. WORDS WITH A DOUBLE MEANING.—Pink. Pear, Pair. Pine. Court. Spring. Shine. Meet, Meat. Rock.

The Editor earnestly requests those who send subscriptions, or write letters asking for books, to be printed in the Book Club, to read the *directions* on the last page of the paper.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe St., Quincy, Mass.

It would assist us very much if those who give books would send word regularly to our Book Club secretary what books they have given and to whom.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Headquarters of the Cheerful Letter Exchange are at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, may be found there on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

The January meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange will be held at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., on Friday, January 3, at 10.30 A.M.

HEREAFTER, ADDRESS ALL COMMUNICATIONS, INTENDED FOR THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, "CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE, 25 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MASS." THIS INCLUDES SUBSCRIPTIONS, CHANGES OF ADDRESS, REQUESTS FOR DISCONTINUANCE, BEGGING LETTERS RECEIVED BY MEMBERS OR BRANCHES.

The Cheerful Letter Exchange is developing Home Study work for the benefit of those without school facilities.

Arrangements will be made for lessons by correspondence in any school subject for those who are unable to leave their homes or who are far from centres of education.

Will those who would like to receive such instruction please send requests to Mrs. Ruth Peterson, 37 Ridgemont Street, Allston, Mass.

The Editor asks POSTMASTERS who send notices of changes of address not to send these notices to the Editor, but to the Secretary, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

Hereafter, subscriptions to *The Cheerful Letter* should be sent to the secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Make checks payable to Lily Blunt Porter.

Chairman, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.

Secretary, Mrs. Lily Blunt Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Editor of "The Cheerful Letter," Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.